

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-11. Canceled.

12.-14. Canceled.

15.-22. Canceled.

23. (New) A method of potentiating the activity of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>-producing lactic acid bacteria comprising adding to or mixing with a first component (a) consisting of at least one strain of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>-producing lactic acid bacteria a potentiating amount of a second component (b) consisting of at least one strain of arginine-utilizing lactic acid bacteria, wherein component (a) is selected from the group consisting of the strains of the species *Lactobacillus crispatus*, *Lactobacillus salivarius* and *Lactobacillus casei*, and component (b) is selected from the group consisting of the strains of the species *Lactobacillus brevis*, *Lactobacillus gasseri* and *Lactobacillus fermentum*.

24. (New) The method according to claim 23, in which the strain of lactic acid bacteria in component (b) is biologically pure *Lactobacillus brevis* DSM 11988, or mutants or derivatives thereof.

25. (New) The method according to claim 23, in which the ratio of the number of bacteria in component (a) to the number of bacteria in component (b) is from 1:100 to 100 : 1.

26. (New) The method according to claim 25, in which the said ratio is from 1 : 5 to 5 : 1.

27. (New) The method according to Claim 26, in which the said ratio is from 1: 1.

28. (New) The method according to claim 23 comprising from  $1 \times 10^2$  to  $5 \times 10^{11}$  bacteria of component (a) and from  $1 \times 10^2$  to  $5 \times 10^{11}$  bacteria of component (b).

29. (New) The method according to claim 28 comprising from  $1 \times 10^9$  bacteria of component (a) and from  $3 \times 10^9$  bacteria of component (b).

30. (New) The method according to Claim 28, in the form of tablets, sucking tablets, sweets, chewing gum, gelatin capsules, pessaries, suppositories or micro-enemas.

31. (New) The method according to Claim 23, in the form of pellets, dental creams and gels, denture powders, mouthwashes, dentifrices, sprays, suspensions and ointments.

32. (New) The method according to Claim 23, comprising also adding or mixing at least one other strain of lactic acid bacteria selected from the group consisting of *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus buchneri*, *Lactobacillus casei*, *Lactobacillus cateniforme*, *Lactobacillus cellobiosus*, *Lactobacillus crispatus*, *Lactobacillus curvatus*, *Lactobacillus delbrueckii*, *Lactobacillus jensenii*, *Lactobacillus leichmannii*, *Lactobacillus minutus*, *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus salivarius*, *Lactobacillus brevis*, *Lactobacillus gasseri*, *Lactobacillus fermentum*, *Bifidobacterium adolescentis*, *Bifidobacterium angulatum*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum*, *Bifidobacterium breve*, *Bifidobacterium catenulatum*, *Bifidobacterium dentium*, *Bifidobacterium eriksonii*,

*Bifidobacterium infantis*, *Bifidobacterium longum*, *Bifidobacterium plantarum* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*.

33. (New) The method according to Claim 23, additionally comprising adding or mixing vitamins, quaternary ammonium bases, mineral salts, antioxidants and anti-plaque agents with component (a) and component (b).

34. (New) The method according to claim 23, wherein component (a) is *Lactobacillus crispatus* and component (b) is *Lactobacillus brevis*.

35. (New) The combination according to claim 23, wherein component (a) is *Lactobacillus salivarius* and component (b) is *Lactobacillus brevis*.

36. (New) The composition according to claim 23, wherein component (a) is *Lactobacillus salivarius* and component (b) is *Lactobacillus fermentum*.

37. (New) The combination according to claim 34, wherein the ratio of the number of bacteria in component (a) to the number of bacteria in component (b) is 1:1.

38. (New) A method of prophylaxis or treating infections or inflammatory conditions caused by bacteria, virus or fungi, comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a combination of lactic acid bacteria comprising a first component (a) consisting of at least one strain of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>-producing lactic acid bacteria; and a second component (b) consisting of at least one strain of arginine-utilizing lactic acid bacteria, wherein component (a) is selected from the group consisting of the strains of the species *Lactobacillus crispatus*, *Lactobacillus salivarius* and *Lactobacillus casei*, and component (b) is selected from the group consisting of the strains of the

species *Lactobacillus Brevis*, *Lactobacillus gasseri* and *Lactobacillus fermentum*, provided that when component (a) is *Lactobacillus casei*, component (b) is not *Lactobacillus gasseri* - or *Lactobacillus fermentum* and when component (a) is *Lactobacillus crispatus*, component (b) is not *Lactobacillus fermentum*.

39. (New) The method according to claim 38 wherein the combination is applied to the subject's mouth, vagina, urethra, nose, eyes or ears.

40. (New) The method according to claim 38, in which the infections and inflammatory conditions are selected from the group consisting of gingivitis, periodontitis, mucositis, stomatitis caused by drugs and/or physical agents, Behçet's syndrome, diakeratosis of the oral cavity, glossitis, sore throat, sialadenitis, sialolithiasis, pemphigus, *Lichen planus*, Sjögren's syndrome, vaginosis, vaginitis, urethritis, prostatitis, proctitis, otitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, sinusitis, leucoplakia, aphthae, herpes, and infections of *Helicobacter pylori* in the oral cavity.

41. (New) The method according to claim 38 in which the combination is applied to an oral cavity as a deodorant, anti-inflammatory, anti-caries or anti-plaque agent.